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A decade of change in China

A corpus-based discourse analysis of ten government work reports

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The Government Work Reports (GWRs) of China are important documents conveying the government's voice and publicising the tasks they set for the country, and they attract much attention from diverse sectors of the community. Merging corpus methodology and critical discourse analysis, this study* focuses on 10 years of GWRs to observe the dialectical relationship between discourse and social change. It shows that the discourses represented in the GWRs result in new concerns, which in turn affect the recipients of the discourse and their actions and create new discourses.

Keywords: Social change; government work report; corpus-based discourse analysis

1. Introduction

The Government Work Reports (GWRs) examined in this paper are reports that are delivered annually by the Chinese State Premier at the National People's Congress (NPC). They are also heard by the Political Consultative Conference (PCC). As an official document, the GWR has a special generic structure which consists of:

1. a review of the work of the past year, reporting general achievements of the economy, social undertakings and the fulfillment of economic targets of the past year;
2. a summary of the major tasks of the coming year, including a summary of the government's work plan and its social and economic targets and a detailed report of how the government will put the plans into action;

3. Government plans for internal reform and self-improvement, including a detailed statement of the measures the government will take to reform the government's functions, build socialist democracy and reform the administrative and political system;
4. other matters that usually include policies regarding diplomatic and international affairs;
5. the first year of a 'Five-Year-Plan', a national plan for the social and economic development of the next five years, a review of the past five years and a rough plan of the next five years are also included in the report.

The Government Work Reports are important documents for conveying the government's voice and publicising the tasks it sets for the country. We may index changes in focus of the government by examining a series of these reports. The GWRs, delivered in the form of institutional discourse, reveal the sort of determination one can expect from the government. The speakers' power and authority are easily identified, both linguistically in, for example, the frequent use of imperatives (sentences where the subject is omitted or implied), and ideologically in the firm, authoritative tone that imposes responsibility for putting all the plans into action. We are, therefore, justified in predicting from these texts the effect the GWRs are likely to have on the development of the Chinese society.

In this study, accordingly, we examine the ten GWRs which were delivered from 1999 to 2008. The reason for this selection of data is that this decade covers two offices of government, namely, Zhu Rongji's office from 1999 to 2003 and Wen Jiabao's from 2004 to 2008; the discourses of this period may contain significant indices of change in discourse. We are interested in linguistic construction and the reflection of the social changes and transformation of this decade in China as it is evident in the ten GWRs.

The research methodology used in this study is a merging of corpus linguistics and critical discourse analysis (CDA). The ten GWRs (1999–2008)[1] were collected, out of which two sub corpora, Zhu's GWRs and Wen's GWRs, were created. A one million-word balanced corpus of written Mandarin created by McEnery and Xiao (2004), known as the Lancaster Corpus of Mandarin Chinese (LCMC), was used as a reference corpus (See Table 1). The corpus software used in this study is WordSmith Tools Version 4 (Scott 2004). We apply some corpus techniques, for example, checking for frequency, clusters, keywords, concordance and collocation to examine the topics or issues discussed in the two offices' GWRs. This linguistic examination of the GWRs is related to the social changes happening in China. In this respect, we draw on the theory of discourse developed in CDA and investigate how the GWRs as a discourse type functions in the social changes, for example, as an ideological force that facilitates the change.

Table 1. Corpora used in this study

Corpus	Data covered	Size/tokens
Zhu's GWRs	1999–2003	42,516
Wen's GWRs	2004–2008	50,461

2.   Corpus linguistics and critical discourse analysis

The combination of corpus techniques with CDA is valuable, adding quantitative balance to the more qualitative discourse analysis. Corpus techniques and CDA methods are able to complement each other in that CDA can make good use of the systematic and significant language patterns obtained in corpus linguistics for its analysis of the linguistic traces of particular discourses.

The discourse analytical approach adopted in this study is based on Fairclough's (1995) critical approach to discourse analysis. Fairclough's critical approach to discourse analysis includes linguistic description of the language text, interpretation of the relationship between the (productive and interpretative) discursive process and the text, and explanation of the relationship between the discursive process and the social processes.

Our analysis is descriptive, interpretive and explanatory. The two corpora are regarded as texts containing the theme we will target. Corpus-analytical techniques such as frequency lists, keywords, clusters, collocations and concordances will be used to explore repetitions and patterns in the language used in the GWRs. These patterns reveal 'linguistic traces' of discourses around the reports. Such discourses are thus identified, then interpreted and explained by undertaking contextual analysis which goes beyond the texts themselves.

2.1   Critical discourse analysis

CDA addresses social issues and aims to bring about social change. CDA claims to achieve its goals by critically analysing discourses, which, according to Wodak and Meyer (2009), are primarily language in use, but this use is essentially entangled with power and ideology. Discourse is then social practice (Fairclough 1992; Chouliaraki & Fairclough 1999), and CDA is to make explicit the power relations and ideologies hidden in the various discourses, such as racial discourse, media discourse, organisational discourse, political discourse, to name just a few. A growing interest in applied linguistics is the relation between language and ideology, in particular, the role of language in forming and transmitting assumptions about what the world is and should be like, and the role of language in maintaining

(or challenging) existing power relations. In practice, CDA has developed several approaches, such as the dialectical-relational approach (Fairclough 2009), discourse-historical approach (Wodak 2001), and social-cognitive approach. For this study, we adopt Fairclough's approach.

CDA has developed a theory that explains how discourse change brings about change in society. Fairclough (2003, 2006), for example, believes that discourse is socially shaping while it is socially shaped, and that social changes are often initiated with new discourses. He observed the reform phenomenon in Romanian higher education and found that it was the introduction and adoption of a new discourse, the discourse of the European educational system that initiated the change of syllabus and other new practices in Romanian higher education (Fairclough 2006). The shaping function of discourse, however, does not happen by itself. In the Romanian case, for example, the new discourse will not be adopted if the socially and institutionally based agency or agent does not want it. In other words, the external discourse does not just flow into new space; it is, so to speak, carried there by those in power and authority. In Fairclough's words, the external discourses are recontextualised in so far as they are appropriated within successful strategies of internal social agencies and agents within the recontextualising context (ibid).

Fairclough's theory of discourse and social change is significant for investigating the social transformation in China. Just as the recontextualisation of social practices is, in its initial phase, the recontextualisation of a discourse or discourses, which projects or will project imagery of wider social changes, so we believe that the new discourses in the GWRs will set the direction for social change. In so far as such new discourses are appropriated within successful strategies, for example, by social agencies and agents of different levels of government, they may be operationalised, enacted in new ways of acting and interacting, and materialised in the physical world, thus bringing about real change in social life.

2.2   Corpus linguistics

To investigate the social change in China over a certain period of time, one requires observation of discourses in large quantity, for which the methods developed in corpus linguistics are helpful. According to Biber et al. (1998:3), "text corpora provide large databases of naturally-occurring discourse, enabling empirical analyses of the actual patterns of use in a language, and when coupled with (semi-) automatic computational tools, the corpus-based approach enables analyses of a scope not otherwise feasible." Therefore, corpora have a significant potential for discourse analysis as control data (McEnery & Wilson 2001), and by helping researchers identify objectively widespread patterns of naturally occurring

language and rare but telling examples, corpora play an extremely important role in critical social research (Baker & McEnery 2005). Research applying corpora in critical discourse analysis has been done to investigate the discourse on refugees and asylum seekers (Baker & McEnery 2005; Baker et al. 2008), the representation of Islam in British newspapers (Baker 2010) and the discourses on terrorism in the presses of China and the UK (Qian 2010), and this research has proved fruitful.

A feature of this research is the use of a corpus in conjunction with corpus exploration tools. Corpus tools can manipulate data in a number of ways, making it easier for researchers to identify linguistic patterns. In our study, such analytical techniques as frequency, clusters, keywords, collocation and concordance are applied in various ways to identify frequent and significant language patterns, providing potential for analysis of the linguistic traces of particular discourses.

Frequency lists of keywords in the corpus, for example, identify for further inspection the typical use of lexical patterns, and thus prove to be a good starting point in discourse analysis. In addition, keywords, the distinctively identified words in the corpus, are significant for critical discourse analysis, as they may reveal a preoccupation with certain ways of presenting information. When supplemented by concordance searches, enabling the query words to be closely examined in terms of their context of use and function in furthering particular discourses, the analysis of keywords is more revealing, helping researchers see the overall characterisation of the "aboutness" (or general view) of the corpora, in our case, for example, how the topics are represented as a way of doing politics.

3. A corpus-based discourse analysis of GWRs

3.1   Keywords analysis of GWRs

A keyword in corpus linguistics is any word with specific frequency when compared to a reference corpus.[2] Keyword lists tend to reveal three types of word, which in Scott's (1997) terms are proper nouns, keywords of aboutness and grammatical words. The overall characterisation of the aboutness of the corpora will be undertaken by using a keywords analysis and by exploring the links between keywords. In terms of discourse, this aboutness is global meaning, or in van Dijk's (2009: 68) terms, "semantic macrostructures", "topics" or "themes", which "embody the (subjectively) most important information of a discourse". Topics are significant in CDA because they are usually controlled by powerful speakers. Moreover, they have an obvious effect on the process of reproduction that underlies social power and dominance, hence the importance of the keywords analysis of the GWRs in general, and Zhu's and Wen's in particular.

In order to extract the keywords in each of the GWR from 1999 to 2008, we compared each year's GWR to LCMC, and obtained keywords such as 企业/*enterprise*,[3] 改革/*innovation*, 和/*and*, 建设/*construction*, 经济/*economy*, 加强/*strengthen*, 市场/*market*, 增加/*increase*, 发展/*develop*, 制度/*system*, 提高/*raise*, 教育/*education*, 体制/*institution* and 农村/*the rural area* co-occurring in each of the GWR. We can infer from these keywords that the common concerns in the ten years' GWRs are principally about innovation of enterprise, economy construction, the administration of the market system, education and issues of rural reform.

However, when we compared the two sub-corpora each other, we got two somewhat different keywords lists (See Table 2).

Table 2. Key lexical words of Zhu's and Wen's GWRs

Zhu's (1999–2003)	Wen's (2004–2008)
企业/*enterprise*, 收/*collect*, 长江/*Yangtze River*, 调整/*adjust* 技术/*technology*, 市场经济/*market economy*, 进行/*carry out*, 科研/*scientific research*	节能/*energy conservation*, 和谐/*harmony*, 安全/*security*, 公共/*public*, 元/*yuan*, 农村/*rural area*, 卫生/*health*, 上涨/*rise*, 补贴/*subsidy*, 草案/*draft*, 发展观/*concept of development*, 十一五/*eleventh Five-year*, 推进/*push forward*, 文化/*culture*, 控制/*control*, 非/*non*, 节约/*thrift*, 安排/*arrange*, 社会/*society*, 偏/*tend*, 调控/*adjust and control*, 更加/*more*, 农民工/*rural migrant worker*, 排/*release*, 群众/*the masses*, 救助/*support*, 价格/*price*, 自主/*self*, 体系/*system*, 制度/*system*, 免费/*free of charge*, 转型/*transition*, 土地/*land*

Table 2 shows that there are more keywords in Wen's reports than in Zhu's, indicating that Wen's term of government has more foci of attention (and topics) than Zhu's. In Zhu's term the government shed light on innovation in state-owned enterprises, the construction of protective forest along Yangtze River, the development of a socialist market economy and innovation in scientific research institutes, while in Wen's the government extended its attention to a wider range of social issues, such as energy conservation, the construction of a harmonious society, rural migrant workers, social welfare, and so on. We will discuss this change of focus in Section 4, but first we extend the keyword analysis (and hence the foci) of the GWRs to a concordance analysis in order to observe each keyword in the context of the sentence in which it occurs.

3.2   Concordance analysis of the GWRs

The difference as shown in Table 2 can be further examined by observing the concordance lines, that is, the context in which these keywords occur. We will discuss each of the sub-corpora respectively, to see how the topics are dealt with by each term of government.

In order to explore how Zhu's GWRs represent innovation in the state-owned enterprises, we firstly examine the three-word cluster of the most frequent keyword 企业/*enterprise* (see Figure 1) in Zhu's GWRs. Then we carry out further inspection of the concordance lines of the first three most frequent clusters.

A cluster is the context in which a word occurs, as well as sometimes the way in which words occur in idiomatic structures. Figure 1 shows that the most frequent cluster with 企业/*enterprise* is 国有企业改革 *state-owned enterprise innovation* (Line 1: 24 times), followed by 企业下岗职工/*laid-off workers of enterprise* (Line 2: 14 times), 现代企业制度/*modern enterprise system* (Line 3: 14 times), 企业技术改造 *technological reform* (Line 5: 13 times), 企业离退休人员 *retired staff* (Line 9: 7 times), 国有大中型企业 *state-owned large and medium-sized enterprise* (Line 10: 7 times).

No.	Cluster	Frequency
1	国有**企业**改革	24
2	**企业**下岗职工	14
3	现代**企业**制度	14
4	国有**企业**下岗	13
5	**企业**技术改造	13
6	下岗职工基本	13
7	建立现代**企业**	10
8	**企业**改革和	8
9	**企业**离退休人员	7
10	国有大中型**企业**	7

Figure 1. Clusters with 企业/enterprise in Zhu's GWRs

This observation of the clusters with 企业/*enterprise* suggests that Zhu's GWRs are most concerned with issues of *reform* (both enterprises and technology), *laid-off workers* and *system*. We will further observe the concordance lines of the three most frequent clusters i.e. 国有企业改革 *state-owned enterprise innovation*, 企业下岗职工/*laid-off workers of enterprise*, 现代企业制度 *modern enterprise system*, to see discursive constructions of these issues in the GWRs.

The concordance lines in Figure 2 show that innovation is constructed as the central part of innovation in the economic system and it is metaphorically

Concordance		
1	还很困难；收入分配关系尚未理顺；	**国有企业改革**任务还相当**繁重**；市场经济秩序有
2	强再就业工作和社会保障体系建设	**国有企业改革**时整个经济体制改革的**中心环节**，
3	止国有资产流失，发挥了重要作用。	**国有企业改革**之所以取得重大进展，至关重要的
4	硬，加大工作力度，打了一场**深化**	**国有企业改革**的**攻坚战**。一是加快现代企业制度
5	坚持不懈的努力。（四）坚持**推进**	**国有企业改革**，切实加强再就业工作金额社会保
6	积累了经验。实践表明，中央关于	**国有企业改革**核促进再就业，加强社会保障体系
7	的方针，千方百计促进就业再就业，	**国有企业改革**要坚持建议增效与促进再就业相
8	系。只有全面贯彻执行，才能**保证**	**国有企业改革**目标的实现。（五）坚持全面提高
9	中西部地区的经济技术合作。**深化**以	**国有企业改革**为中心的各项改革。近几年，国有
10	轨道前进。经济体制改革进一步**深化**	**国有企业改革**继续**推进**，现代企业制度建设加
11	业改革为中心的各项政策，近几年，	**国有企业改革**取得了很大进展，但是任务仍然相
12	农村中存在的突出问题，**巩固和扩大**	**国有企业改革**成果，在建立现代企业制度、转换
13	推进改革，扩大对外开放。继续**深化**	**国有企业改革**，使企业真正成为市场竞争的主
14	经济持续快速发展提供强大的动力。	**国有企业改革**是**深化**经济体制改革的中心环节。
15	落实党的十五届四中全会觉得，实现	**国有企业改革**和脱困三年目标，是大多数国有大

Figure 2. Concordance lines of 国有企业改革/*state-owned enterprise innovation* in Zhu's GWRs

described as a tenacious battle calling for tedious effort. Moreover, the discourse of innovation is signified by a war metaphor 攻坚战/*a tenacious battle* (Line 4) and 繁重/*tedious effort* (Line 1), suggesting the difficult process that innovation faces. The co-occurred words 中心环节/*central part* (Line 2), 深化/*deepen* (Lines 4, 9, 10, 13, 14), 巩固和扩大/*consolidate and enlarge* (Line 12), 推进/*push forward* (Lines 5, 10), 保证/*ensure* (Line 8) reflect Zhu's resolute policy in dealing with this issue. The following statements extracted from Zhu's GWRs are cases in point.

> Example 1: 国有企业改革是深化经济体制改革的 <u>中心环节</u>。贯彻落实党的十五届四中全会决定，实现国有企业改革和脱困三年目标,使大多数国有大中型亏损企业摆脱困境，在大多数国有大中型骨干企业初步建立现代企业制度。这是今年政府工作的 <u>重中之重</u>。(GWR 2000)
>
> Translation: The reform of state-owned enterprises occupies the <u>central part</u> in efforts to deepen economic restructuring. T<u>he top priority</u> of the government's work this year is to carry out and put into practice the decisions made at the Fourth Plenum of the Fifteenth CPC Central Committee, to realise the three-year target to reform state-owned enterprises and clear up any difficult situations, to enable most of the

loss-making state-owned large and medium sized enterprises get out of difficulties and preliminarily establish a modern enterprise system in most large and medium-sized state-owned key enterprises.

Example 2: 五年来，我们坚持社会主义市场经济的改革方向，知难而进，敢于碰硬，加大工作力度，打了一场深化国有企业改革的 **攻坚战** (GWR 2003)

Translation: In the past five years, we fought <u>a tenacious battle</u> to deepen the reform of state-owned enterprises by adhering to the socialist market economy orientation, braving difficulties, overcoming tough obstacles and constantly intensifying our work.

When we make a further inspection of the concordance lines of 下岗职工/*laid-off workers*, we see its co-occurred verb phrases 稳步推进/*steadily push forward* (Line 1), 确保/*ensure* (Line 2,3,4,6), 逐步实现/*gradually realise* (Line 5), 继续做好/*continue to do a good job* (Line 8), 坚持和完善/*adhere to and improve* (Line 7), as indicated in Figure 3.

Concordance		
1	各项社会保障覆盖面。**稳步推进**国有企业	下岗职工基本生活保障向失业保险并轨，
2	急仍然是落实"两个确保"，**确保**国有企业	下岗职工基本生活费和离退休人员基本
3	发展、稳定全局的大事。要**确保**国有企业	下岗职工基本生活费和离退休人员基本
4	益。大力实施再就业工程，**确保**国有企业	下岗职工基本生活费和离退休人员基本
5	。健全失业保险制度，**逐步实现**国有企业	下岗职工基本生活保障和失业保险并轨，
6	各级财政要调整支出结构，**确保**国有企业	下岗职工基本生活费、离退休人员基本养
7	抓紧抓好。当前，要**坚持和完善**国有企业	下岗职工基本生活保障、失业保险和城市
8	境和市场条件。第二，**继续做好**国有企业	下岗职工基本生活保障和再就业工作。这

Figure 3. Concordance lines of 下岗职工/*Laid-off workers* in Zhu's GWRs

The co-occurred words of 下岗职工/*laid-off workers* shown in Figure 3 suggest that the redeployment of the laid-off workers is constructed as the priority and thus needs more attention from the government. The government regards the solution to the redeployment of laid-off workers as a primary measure to ensure the success of innovation in state-owned enterprises. The policy for dealing with the laid-off workers is clearly stated in Zhu's GWRs, as is seen in the following extracts.

Example 3: 继续做好国有<u>企业下岗职工基本生活保障和再就业工作</u>。这是深化企业改革的 重要任务，也是保持社会稳定的重要措施。 (GWR 1999)

Translation: Continue to guarantee the basic needs of <u>laid off workers</u> from state-owned enterprises and help them find new jobs. This is an important task to deepen the reform of enterprises and an important measure to maintain social stability.

Example 4: 大力促进<u>下岗职工再就业</u>。各地要引导职工转变择业观念，努力开拓就业门路，搞好职业培训，使更多的下岗职工尽早实现再就业。各级政府和有关部门要通力合作，加强督促检查，保证各项再就业政策落到位。 (GWR 2000)

Translation: Vigorously promote redeployment of <u>laid-off workers</u>. To guide the workers in changing their careers around the idea of opening up employment opportunities, and improving vocational training, so that more laid-off workers can be re-employed as soon as possible. Government at all levels and relevant departments should work together to strengthen supervision and inspection ensuring that the redeployment policy is effective.

Figure 4 shows the concordance lines of 现代企业制度/*modern enterprise system* in Zhu's GWRs. The verb 建立/*set up* (Lines 1, 3, 5, 8, 10) is the most frequent verb co-occurring on the left side of the query word, suggesting that setting up a modern enterprise system in Zhu's agenda during his term of government is an important element.

	Concordance	
1	私营等非公有制解决发展。按照**建立**	**现代企业制度**的要求，继续推进国有企业规
2	化国有企业改革的攻坚战。一是**加快**	**现代企业制度**建设。按照"产权清晰、权责明
3	多数国有大中型骨干企业**初步建立**	**现代企业制度**，涌现出一批有实力、有活力
4	一步深化。国有企业改革继续推进，	**现代企业制度**建设**加快**。国家向重点企业派
5	机制。今年要重点检查上市公司**建立**	**现代企业制度**的情况，找出存在问题，认真
6	须继续下大力气推进。一是**切实加强**	**现代企业制度**建设。继续推行规范化的公司
7	竞争的主体。重点是加快建立和**完善**	**现代企业制度**。鼓励国有大中型企业通过规
8	翻一番奠定坚实基础；国有企业**建立**	**现代企业制度**取得重大进展，社会保障制度
9	经济体制初步建立。国有大中型企业	**现代企业制度**的改革**取得重要进展**。大多数
10	多数国有大中型骨干企业**初步建立**	**现代企业制度**。今年是实现这个目标的关键

Figure 4. Concordance lines of 现代企业制度/modern enterprise system in Zhu's GWRs

The other co-occurring verbs 加快/*accelerate* (Lines 2, 4), 完善/*improve* (Line 7) and 切实加强/*firmly strengthen* (Line 6) convey that the setting up of the modern enterprise system has been actively promoted. The right co-occurrence of 取得重要进展/*achieve great progress* (Lines 8, 9) reflects the government's satisfaction and confidence. The adverb 初步/*preliminarily* (Lines 3, 10) indicates that the modern enterprise system is still in its infancy and requires further attention.

> Example 5: 大多数国有大中型骨干企业初步建立现代企业制度，涌现出一批有实力、有活力和有竞争力的优势企业。国有中小企业进一步放开搞活。垄断行业管理体制改革迈出实质性步伐。城乡集体经济得到新的发展。股份制经济不断扩大。个体、私营等非公有制经济较快发展，在发展经济、增加就业、活跃市场、扩大出口方面发挥了重要作用。 (GWR 2003)
>
> Translation: Most large and medium-sized key state-owned enterprises have initially established the modern enterprise system, and a number of dynamic and competitive enterprises have come to the fore. Further progress was made in opening up and revitalising small and medium-sized state-owned enterprises. Substantive progress was made in restructuring the management system of monopoly industries. The collective economy in urban and rural areas made new headway. The joint-stock company sector of the economy expanded continuously. Individually-owned businesses, private enterprises and other non-public sectors of the economy developed quite rapidly and played an important role in stimulating economic growth, creating more jobs, invigorating the market and expanding exports.

To sum up, observing the clusters of the most frequently occurring keyword 企业/*enterprise* and their concordance lines in Zhu's GWRs suggests the policy of Zhu's term of government. The reports constructed innovation in state-owned enterprises as the top priority of the government, the hardship of the task as a tenacious battle, and the stage of innovation as infancy, showing the challenges the government faced and the determination and confidence they owned. The keyword analysis of 企业/*enterprise* explores the primary concerns of Zhu's term of government, while the concordance analysis provides evidence suggesting his policy and his way of dealing with the issues.

3.3   Concordance analysis of Wen's GWRs

There is a dramatic increase of keywords in Wen's GWRs. Due to limited space, in this section we will examine the concordance lines of the two most frequent keywords, 节能减排/*energy conservation and reduction of pollutant emissions* (Figure 5) and 和谐/*harmony* (Figure 6).

Concordance lines of 节能减排/*energy conservation and reduction of pollutant emissions* in Wen's GWRs show that there are more verbs as opposed to nouns co-occurring with them as highlighted in Figure 5. These verbs are 实施/*put into*

	Concordance
1	质量安全工作今年是"十一五" **节能减排**约束性目标的关键一年,务必增
2	座位约束性目标。近两年,又提出并**实施** **节能减排**综合性工作方案,建立节能减排
3	法保障和金额廉租住房建设的支付;**增强** **节能减排**和环境保护的支出;解决农村
4	全审计、监察体系、加强执法力度,**强化** **节能减排**工作责任制。十是增强全
5	能源资源节约和环境保护奖惩机制。**执行** **节能减排**统计监测制度,健全审计、监察
6	耕地 2289 万亩。经过各方面的努力, **节能减排**取得积极进展,2007 年单位国
7	"农"、社会保障、医疗卫生、教育、文化、 **节能减排**和廉租房住房建设等方面的支
8	用资源和治理污染的先进适用技术,**实施** **节能减排**重大技术和示范工程。大力发展
9	并**实施**主体功能区规划和政策,**加大** **节能减排**和环境保护力度,做好产品质量
10	出并实施节能减排综合性工作方案,**建立** **节能减排**指标体系,监测体系、考核体系
11	,以及年耗能万吨标准煤以上重点企业的 **节能减排**工作。全面实施低效燃煤工业锅
12	制。抓紧**建立和完善**科学、完整、统一的 **节能减排**指标体系,监测体系、考核体系
13	现,国务院以后每年都要向全国人大**报告** **节能减排**的进展情况,并在"十一五"期末
14	完善节能降耗、污染减排政策,普遍**建立** **节能减排**目标责任制。积极推进重点行业

Figure 5. Concordance lines of 节能减排/*energy conservation and reduction of pollutant emissions* in Wen's GWRs

practice (Line 3, 8, 9), 强化/*strengthen* (Line 4), 执行/*carry out* (Line 5)*, 报告/ report,* (Line 13), 建立/*set up* (Line 10, 14), and 推进/*push forward*, which suggest actions. With 节能减排/*energy conservation and reduction of pollutant emissions* as Goal (recipient of action), the semantics that can be inferred from the concordance are that the environmental protection measures have been put into practice in this period of time. We can see this from the following extract.

> Example 6: 今年是完成"十一五"节能减排约束性目标的关键一年,务必增强紧迫感,加大攻坚力度,力求取得更大成效。一是落实电力、钢铁、水泥、煤炭、造纸等行业淘汰落后生产能力计划。建立淘汰落后产能退出机制,完善和落实关闭企业的配套政策措施。同时,按照规划加强这些行业先进生产能力的建设。(GWR 2008)

Translation: This year is a crucial year for reaching the binding target of the "Eleventh Five-Year" plan for energy conservation and reduction of pollutant emissions. Be sure to <u>enhance</u> the sense of urgency and <u>intensify</u> efforts to <u>tackle</u> difficult problems, and <u>strive</u> to achieve greater successes. First, <u>carry out</u> the plan to eliminate backward production capacity in electricity, iron and steel, cement, coal, paper and other industries; <u>establish</u> the mechanism to eliminate backward production capacity, <u>improve and implement</u> the supporting policies to the closure of enterprises. At the same time, <u>strengthen</u> these sectors through the planned construction of advanced production capacity.

In this report verbs like *enhance, intensify, strive, strengthen, carry out, establish, improve and implement* are chosen to express the determination of the government to take action to reach the target for energy conservation and reduction of pollutant emissions.

    As for the concordance lines of 和谐/*harmony*, we observe that this keyword goes together with nouns (such as *equality, unity, mutual assistance, justice, peace, security*), to form a compound word (e.g. harmonious society or social harmony), suggesting not an action (as in the case of the concordance of 节能减排/*energy*

	Concordance	
1	改革开放、保障和改善民生，促进社会	和谐，付出了巨大的努力，做了大量工
2	主义经济建设、政治建设、文化建设与	和谐社会建设，为"十一五"开好局、起
3	道路，坚持改革开放，坚持科学发展、	和谐发展、和平发展，才能最终实现现
4	主权、安全、领土完整和促进社会主义	和谐社会，认真贯彻党的十六大以来各
5	国家主权、安全、领土完整和促进社会	和谐稳定作出了重大贡献。坚持
6	放为动力推进各项工作，构建社会主义	和谐社会，推动社会主义物质文明、政
7	改革，加快构筑落实科学发展观和建设	和谐社会的体制保障。全面提高对外开
8	实现经济社会又好又快发展，促进社会	和谐。第三，必须坚持改革开放。
9	友爱、充满活力、安定有序、人与自然	和谐相处的社会主义和谐社会，要广泛
10	定有序、人与自然和谐相处的社会主义	和谐社会，要广泛团结一切可以团结的
11	际两个市场、两种资源。三是着力建设	和谐社会。建设民主法制、公平正义、
12	加强和巩固基层政权，推进和谐社区、	和谐村镇建设。完善社会稳定预警体系
13	界各国人民一道，为建立和平、公正、	和谐的新世界而不懈奋斗！三、关于《
14	区经济发展，巩固和发展平等团结互助	和谐的社会主义民族关系。全面贯彻党

Figure 6. The concordance lines of 和谐/*harmony* in Wen's GWRs

conservation and reduction of pollutant emissions), but a state of harmonious culture, harmonious society, harmonious community, harmonious world and harmonious relations between each ethnic group.

The nouns occurring in the concordance lines of harmony, e.g. the construction of harmonious society, and of economy, politics and culture, maintaining social stability, safeguarding sovereignty, security and territorial integrity etc. are evidence of convergence. According to Hall et al. (1978: 223) "Convergence occurs when two or more activities are linked in a process of signification as to implicitly or explicitly draw parallels between them." Considering this convergence, it is clear that the government regards the construction of the harmonious society to be as important as the concepts mentioned above.

> Example 7: 2006 年是实施"十一五"规划的第一年，改革发展稳定的任务十分繁重。做好政府工作的基本思路是：以邓小平理论和"三个代表"重要思想为指导，认真贯彻党的十六大和十六届三中、四中、五中全会精神，全面落实科学发展观，坚持加快改革开放和自主创新，坚持推进经济结构调整和增长方式转变，坚持把解决涉及人民群众切身利益问题放在突出位置，全面加强社会主义经济建设、政治建设、文化建设与和谐社会建设，为"十一五"开好局、起好步。(GWR 2006)
>
> Translation: The tasks related to reform, development and stability for 2006, the first year in the Eleventh Five-Year Plan, are huge. To do the work of the government well and get the Eleventh Five-Year Plan off to a good start, we need to adopt the following basic line of thinking: take Deng Xiaoping Theory and the important thought of the Three Represents as our guide, closely follow the guidelines set out at the Sixteenth CPC National Congress and at the third to fifth plenary sessions of the Sixteenth Central Committee, fully implement a scientific outlook on development, continue to accelerate reform and opening up and stimulate independent innovation, continue to promote economic restructuring and change of the pattern of growth, always put problems affecting the vital interests of the people high on our agenda, intensify all aspects of the effort to build a socialist economy, promote the development of the country politically and culturally, and create a harmonious society.

4.   Discourse, engine, and social change

Regarding the dialectical relations between discourse and social changes, Fairclough (2006) uses the metaphorical expression, "engine", to illustrate the way in which a change in discourse turns into social practice. He points out that "when changes in discourse are 'operationalised' in more general social change, discourse so to speak 'turns into other things' … just as designs for a new automobile engine

are internalised and materialised in the engine itself" (Fairclough 2006: 11). Fairclough's theory applies to the effect of these GWRs on the happenings of the last decade in China. The intentional repetition and choice of words and topics shapes the ideological framework of the recipients of the GWRs (government officials at various levels), who turn what is described by the keywords into real happenings.

From the standpoint of CDA, GWR as discourse is social practice, involving intentional use of language by powerful social agencies and agents, and the frequently and consciously chosen words (verbs and nouns) are the index of the speakers' primary concerns, which in turn via the institutional discourse become concerns of other social agents. The discourse of setting up a modern enterprise system in Zhu's GWRs led to great innovation in the state-owned enterprises in China. The key principles of the innovation, "clearly established ownership, well defined power and responsibility, separation of enterprise from administration, and scientific management", are put into practice by the state-owned enterprises. Conversely, the long-term innovation has brought in new enterprise operational mechanisms, driving forward social change of China.

The practice of the construction of the harmonious society is the product of its discourse representation in Wen's GWRs. The discursive construction of energy conservation and pollutant emissions reduction has raised high awareness of how to change human behavior and the economic structure in order to deal with global climate change. In short, the production of GWRs and the consequences for social action are as follows: Zhu's and Wen's conscious chosen keywords reflect new topics and changes in GWRs, which, as new discourse, bring about social change through their powerful effect on other social agents.

We can further observe the adoption of the term 农民工/*rural migrant worker* (RMW) in the GWRs from 1999 to 2008. The term does not occur in the GWRs of 1999, 2000, 2001 and 2002, while in 2003, the last year of Zhu's term of office, it is mentioned once. It then frequently appears in Wen's GWRs, seven times in 2004's GWR, once in 2005, 4 times in 2006, 8 times in 2007, and 5 times in 2008. The general dispersion of the term 农民工/*rural migrant worker* in the GWRs from 1999 to 2008 is illustrated in Figure 7.
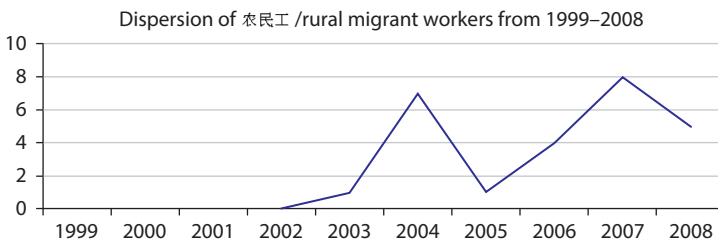

Dispersion of 农民工 /rural migrant workers from 1999–2008

Figure 7. Dispersion of 农民工/*rural migrant worker* in the GWRs from 1999 to 2008

This constant repetition of the term RMW in the GWRs since 2003 has shaped the public attitude towards rural migrant workers and brought about the reconstruction of the social identity of the RMWs. In Zhu's GWRs the issue of the RMW was constructed as a problem, i.e. discrimination and unfair treatment of RMWs. The GWR conveys the voice of the government which tries to find ways to correct such discrimination and unfair treatment, and to protect the legitimate rights and interests of RMWs.

> Example 8: 六是引导农村劳动力合理有序流动。农村富余劳动力向非农产业和城镇转移，是工业化和现代化的必然趋势。我们坚持实施城镇化战略，积极稳妥地发展小城镇。支持农民进城务工就业，清理和纠正对<u>农民工</u>的歧视性政策和乱收费，保护他们的合法权益，同时加强引导和管理。以城市繁荣带动农村发展，促进城乡协调发展，是新形势下解决"三农"问题的重要途径。 (GWR 2003)
>
> Translation: Sixth, we have provided guidance to ensure a proper and orderly movement of agricultural labourers. Surplus agricultural labourers moving to non-agricultural industries and to cities and towns is an inevitable trend in industrialisation and modernisation. In implementing our urbanisation strategy, we have made vigorous yet cautious efforts to develop small cities and towns. We have encouraged farmers to take up temporary or permanent jobs in cities and protected their legitimate rights and interests by rectifying policy discrimination and unauthorised collection of dues from <u>migrant rural workers</u>. At the same time, we have stepped up guidance and management of these matters. Given the new circumstances in the country, sweeping rural development driven by urban prosperity and coordinated development of both urban and rural areas may provide an important way of resolving the problems facing our agriculture, rural areas and farmers.

In the following years, however, problems arose relating to the issue of rural migrant workers, such as back payment, education of their children, housing, endowment insurances, all of which required attention. By frequently articulating this issue in GWRs, Premier Wen consciously brought it to the attention of all officials. For example, in his 2004 GWR, Wen called for effective measures to ensure that the RMWs were paid on time and in full. In the following extract from his 2004 GWR, we can see his concern with this issue and his firm determination to protect the RMWs' rights and interests.

> Example 9: 切实保障农民工工资按时足额支付。当前要抓紧解决克扣和拖欠农民工工资问题。国务院决定，用三年时间基本解决建设领域拖欠工程款和农民工工资问题。清欠要从政府投资的工程做起，同时督促各类企业加快清欠。对拖欠农民工工资拒不支付的企业和经营者，要坚决依法查处。要建立健全及时支付农民工工资的机制，从源头上防止新的拖欠。各类企业都要按时发放工资，严格执行最低工资制度。要保证机关事业单位工资和离退休费

的按时足额发放，任何地方都不得出现新的拖欠。要严格工资专户管理，财政资金要优先保证发放工资。(GWR 2004)

Translation: Measures must be taken to ensure that <u>migrant rural workers</u> are paid on time and in full. We must pay very close attention to solving the problem of their wages being docked or not paid on time. The State Council has decided to fundamentally resolve the problems of default on construction costs and wage arrears for <u>migrant rural workers</u> in the construction industry within three years. Clearing up such back payments should begin with government-funded projects, but other types of enterprises should also be urged to pay off their arrears as soon as possible. Enterprises and managers that refuse to pay back wages to <u>migrant rural workers</u> must be held accountable in accordance with the law. We need to develop a mechanism to ensure the timely payment of <u>migrant rural workers</u>' wages, thereby eliminating the root cause of wage arrears. All enterprises must pay wages on time and strictly obey the minimum wage regulations. We must ensure that all state organs and institutions pay salaries and retirees' pensions on time and in full. New arrears will not be allowed anywhere. Accounts for paying salaries must be placed under stringent oversight, and budgetary funds should be used to pay wages and salaries first. (GWR 2004)

The change in attitude towards RMWs is only one of many social changes that occurred in the past decade. Others we can name include urbanisation, low-carbonisation, and harmonisation. But our study enables us to see the dialectical relations between discourse and social change. More measures have been put into effect to protect the RMWs' interest since the term first appeared in the GWR. This is the result of social development on the one hand, and the shaping force of discourse on the other. As is found in this study, by intentionally putting new words into the GWRs, the GWR producers show their concern with the issue and create new institutional discourses. By influencing other social agents this in turn brings about changes in the current situation of the rural migrant workers.

5.   Conclusions

In this study, we first analysed the keywords in the GWRs of the two terms' offices to observe the overall characterisation of the aboutness. Then, we made a further inspection of the wider contexts of language use in GWRs via concordance lines. By this corpus analysis we found that the presupposition of the government's authoritative role can be cued in the institutional discourses of the GWRs. The institutional discourses also show other social agents the government's determination to put all their plans into action.

The two terms of government headed by two distinctive premiers provide significant data for a critical discourse analysis of the GWRs, and make it possible to observe the role of the social agents' manipulation of discourse in the process of social transformation. This repetitively highlighted theme is discussed and justified by the observation of the case of the rural migrant workers. The RMWs are now well-known to enjoy good welfare provision, but what might not be so well known is that the RMWs had suffered discrimination in various ways. It is argued in this chapter that the change in real life was closely related with, and to a great extent brought about by, the change in discourse. As the word is more frequently brought into the GWRs, the design for a new attitude towards the RMWs, facilitated by the officials at different levels, is "internalised" and "materialised" in the generally accepted and really occurring attitude towards the RMWs. We hope this investigation into the dialectical relations between discourse and social change will inspire further scholarly interest in this area of research.

Notes

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1.   http://www.gov.cn/test/2006–02/16/content_200719.htm (accessed: 06/09/09).

2.   A reference corpus is typically a large corpus which is said to be representative of a particular language variety, e.g. British National Corpus.

3.   The format of a Chinese word and its translation is a Chinese character/the italicised English translation, e.g. 中国/*China,* as the corpus of data is originally Chinese.

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